

# The FORUM

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## Gazette

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## Timing The Elections

By A.S. Narang

**W**ith the announcement of elections for the ninth Lok Sabha all types of speculations have started making rounds. Alliances and seat adjustments among parties apart, in view of the increased role of money and muscle power, particularly of black money power, misuse of state machinery and electronic media, phenomenon of booth capturing, etc., it would be complacent to take for granted that the next general elections will be free and fair. They might well be, it all depends on the vigilance and assertion of public opinion. In fact the very way in which elections have been announced speaks of disregard even for the powers of Election Commission.

### Timing The Elections

It is not for the Government of the day to decide when to hold an election. That is a matter exclu-

sively for the Election Commission to decide. The only power the government has with regard to

timing is dissolution of Lok Sabha and asking for a mid-term poll. Even so the actual date of the poll and election programme are entirely for the Election Commission to determine.

In the present case the Lok Sabha has not been dissolved, yet the elections are being conducted about two months earlier than due. The dates, as is by now well known, have been decided by the government of the day and not by the Election Commission.

Next there are many speculations about government's choosing the last week of November. Observers are suggesting possibilities of Bofors exposures, Babari-Masjid Ram Janam Bhoomi issue going out of hand and defeat of Panchayati Raj-Nagar Palika bills as possible reasons for early polling. Few days back on the basis of these very issues observers in some quarters believed that the government might invoke Article 85 of the constitution which lays down that six

months shall not intervene between two sittings of the Lok Sabha, and have the poll put off till mid-1990.

### Diverting The Issues

This commentator however has written in this paper quite sometime back that elections were likely to be held in the last week of November 1989. The reasons for this were two. One, quite a number of astrologers and Tantriks have predicted this to be the most favourable period for Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in terms of electoral victory. Second, and a rational one was, time being conducive to create a wave since 1971 no elections have been fought on the basis of any political programme. Instead these have been fought on the basis of the phenomenon of a "wave". Its basic purpose has been to divert the attention of voters from basic socio-economic issues.

### The Wave

During the December 1984 Parliamentary elections there

was a strong "sympathy wave" in favour of the Congress(I). The main strategy of the ruling party was to arouse and exploit the anti-Sikh feelings. But such a strategy, while ensured electoral victory, promised neither political stability nor legitimacy of the post-election government. Many individuals and groups refused to back the Opposition and voted for the Congress(I) despite its failures and weaknesses. The endless unity talks among the Opposition parties, leading to greater disunity among them owing to their pettiness also disgusted many. In this sense, along with a wave in favour of the Congress, there was also a negative wave against the Opposition. The negative vote went to the Congress(I) also because Rajiv Gandhi had a clean image—of course not because of what he stood for but because nobody was quite certain what he stood for.

As a whole the victory of the Congress(I) in the 1984 elections was not based on a popular or positive support to a clear socio-economic programme but on the

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## BJP Tries To Provoke Muslims

By FG Correspondent

**T**wo BJP bosses, Lal Krishna Advani and Delhi's Kedar Nath Sahani, by attending the Shri Ram Shila Poojan in Delhi on October 5, made it amply clear that they will henceforth publicly subscribe to the 'India for Hindu' theory. Also, the BJP will wholeheartedly support the demolition of the Babri Masjid and construction of Shri Ram temple to aggravate the already tense communal situation.

The BJP support to the 2,000 Dharmacharyas march through the Capital's 5,000 colonies, campaigning for the construction of the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple on the site of the Babri Masjid was the beginning of the current wave of religious intolerance unleashed by it. Mr Madan Lal Khurana, Delhi's BJP President, appealed to the people of the Capital to welcome

the Dharmacharyas' march by donation and open support.

The atmosphere of the country is being surcharged, it seems, under a well calculated scheme. Passions are being systematically roused through the Ramshila processions. The blood-curdling slogans that are being unashamedly raised in these armed processions are obviously meant to provoke the peace-loving minority.

Or howelse would Mr. Advani explain or interpret the slogans allegedly raised by his admirers in Kota (Rajasthan) on September 14: "We would not allow the progeny of Baabar to remain in India" or "If you want to live in India, you will have to live as Hindu" or "Traitors of the country! Go away to Pakistan". Can these provocations be interpreted in a different way also?

### VICTIMS

Of late, townships with some

Muslim population in Rajasthan are the target. In the recent past, Makrana, Beagod, Tonk, Sirohi and Jhalawad have fallen victim to their machination. The latest is Kota were officially 16 and through unconfirmed reports above 50 casualties have taken place. (Detailed report awaited).

Who could be more authentic than the State Chief Minister in this regard who told the press in Jaipur on September 19 that it was a "part of a planned strategy" of the BJP, RSS, Shiv Sena and Hindu Parishad to create communal trouble in Rajasthan. He made bold to say that he did not mince words in blaming these organizations for exploiting religious feelings of the people in the State.

Well Said!  
When asked why no action had yet been taken against the workers of BJP and other organizations

of its ilk, Mr. Shiv Charan Mathur said that action would be taken once normalcy returned to Kota.

Is it the manner of taking action?

People ask why the district administration did not act on its own contingency plan which was reported to have been prepared after a meeting of district officials and others in Kota on September 6 in view of the plan of some disruptionist organizations to hold a procession on the occasion of "Anant Chaturdasi" on Sept. 14?

A city Congress leader also told Mr. Chidambaram in Kota on September 18 that he had given in writing to the Collector about these plans in the morning of September 14 itself and yet the warning signals were ignored. The State intelligence was also reported to have given a full report to the State authorities about the activities of Bajrang Dal and other front organizations by holding "padyatras" in various districts.

For a proper appreciation of Mr. Mathur's weight, read the following:

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LETTERS

**Akal Takht Jathedar  
And Akali Unity**

Professor Darshan Singh, Jathedar, Akal Takht Sahib, had offered to resign from the post of Jathedar Akal Takht Sahib, if it would help to sort out matters of the "Panth".

This decision has been based on the reaction of certain Akali leaders and members of SGPC for his postponing the *gherao* of the Governor's house.

There is no doubt that this has been interpreted adversely not what would benefit the community in deriving the guidance from the Jathedar Sahib, but from their personal selfish angle. And this has been the curse on the community.

People like Sardar Surjit Singh Barnala ridiculing the status of Akal Takht Sahib in saying that it has three claimants of the post cannot escape the fact that he has been one of the oldest leaders of the Akali Dal. And in practice Akali Dal and SGPC have been two sides of the same coin—the Panth. Instead of making some fruitful efforts to resolve the matter, making the matter more difficult does not credit one with sense of responsibility towards the cause.

There is need to appreciate that once you appoint anyone on this commanding post, we must not allow our faith to dwindle and allow the person to exercise his full authority while dealing with Panthic matters. There are always more than one course open to tackle problem.

Therefore, if by less efforts and without unnecessarily landing the whole community into confrontation with the government, which would only multiply its sufferings, the objective is achieved, should that part be appreciated or providing opportunity for cheap propa-

ganda for some individuals' benefit.

It is a pity that the leaders of UAD (Mann) have also fallen in the same trap. There is no doubt that there is no section of the Sikh community who does not relish the leadership of Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann. In fact his sacrifices in the cause of the Khalsa Panth are not only supreme but being absolutely dedicated and free from selfishness, and there is no other leader of that kind with us.

In the light of this UDA (Mann) should refrain from casting any aspersions on Professor Darshan Singh, the Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib, as it may not harm his status that he enjoys among the Sikh masses, but it is bound to devolute the status of Akal Takht Sahib, which would severely hurt each and every Sikh.

Therefore, all of us should give him full respect and cooperation so that the cause of the community does not suffer. In the meantime UAD (Mann) should have rapport with Professor Darshan Singh to eliminate misconceptions and make the path smooth before the arrival of Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann.

Former Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib, Bhai Jasbir Singh Rode, has special duty to the Panth at this juncture, when the Panth is in doldrums to stabilise it. This mission is supreme than acquiring the post of Akal Takht Sahib. We are sure that Sardar Mann would appreciate if the whole Panth is united prior to his coming out of the jail, as it would be prerequisite to lead the whole community on some permanent selected strategy without wasting any time and energy.

One of the most important points before the community is to ensure that under no circumstances the supreme status of Sri Akal Takht Sahib is commented upon to maintain the reverence it enjoys! Regarding the present system of selecting and appointing someone as Jathedar, Akal Takht Sahib, if not considered appropriate, it should be debated to remove its lacunas. But once a system has been adopted it must be given full trial, and respected by one and all without any reservation for the sake of the institution of Akal Takht Sahib, which is the star for the Khalsa Panth, and needs to be preserved in its originality.

Under the present circumstances, the organization like AISSF should respect the existing system of appointing the Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib. And in the meantime hold a meeting with the present and former Jathedar Sahib to resolve the whole issue. Since the future of this virile community lies on the Sikh youth, they have special responsibility to resolve all the Panthic matters taking all the factors into consideration without being sentimental.

However, Singh Sahib Professor Darshan Singh should take measures to convince the general public that he does not have dictates from Akali Dal or SGPC, and works on his own sense of responsibility. The said organizations keeping the interest of the Panth should also not interfere in functioning of the Jathedar, Akal Takht Sahib. Therefore, under the present circumstances there is no need for Singh Sahib to resign, nor get perturbed.

The history of the Sikh Gurus will show that they always waded through the Panth through chains of hurdles. You have our good wishes in the conduct of panthic mission—*Chardi Kala*.

—Lt. Col. Manohar Singh  
New Delhi (Retd.)

**Injustice**

While the judgment of the Delhi High Court quashing the notification of the Delhi Administration in connection with the November 1984 riots may be justified from the legal angle, it is most distressing that in five full years the government has not brought the culprits to book.

The attitude can only be described as one of criminal neglect, and with that the government hopes to bring peace to Punjab! While daily on the official media we are given lectures on apartheid, national integration ("Mera Bharat Mahan"), nuclear disarmament, etc. sections of our countrymen go without justice, and serious grievances remain unredressed. Did we really deserve this kind of political leadership? Did we achieve independence only to treat our people with such brutal indifference!

Nemai Bose  
Sahaganj

**Sound And Fury**

The Congress(I) will now take the issue to the People.  
- A Congress(I) resolution.

The people have already made up their mind to throw away this corrupt and incompetent Government  
- Mr. V.P. Singh.

I have nothing more to say about this Government. The whole world is watching what kind of a government it is.  
- Mr. Jyoti Basu.

What has emerged is that those who are professing and making tall claims about their purity are, in fact, coloured.  
- Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

I sometimes provide words for his (Mr Rajiv Gandhi's) thoughts.  
- Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar.

The ensuing elections will see the victory of justice over injustice.  
- Mr. Balasaheb Deoras.

Of course, as everyone knows, all Prime Ministers in India and abroad as well as all political parties, take money in kickbacks and other forms.  
- R.K. Karanjia in *The Independent*.

It is their (the Bofors company's) money. Who are we to question them?  
- Mr. Janardhan Poojary.

We are very close to getting to know who exactly received the money.  
- Mr. N. Ram, Associate Editor of *The Hindu*.

He Ram! What has journalism come to in India? Now it's the newspaper that makes the news...it's the journalist who holds Press conference.  
- RGK in *The Independent*.

The Press is creating confusion on the Afghan issue.  
- Mrs Benazir Bhutto.

You journalists have very thick skins.  
- Graham Gooch.

After all, the report has only said an Indian was the principal beneficiary. No politician has been named. Therefore, there is nothing to be panicky about.  
- Mr. N.K.P. Salve.

Why this differential treatment? Is it because I am not a middleman in the Bofors deal? Or because I am the son of V.P. Singh, who is the prime political target of the ruling party?  
- Mr. Ajeya Singh.

If I don't fight for the Prime Ministership, fight within the party or walk out of the Congress, it doesn't mean I have no guts.  
- Mr. N.D. Tiwari.

I've never been a diplomat. It's going to be a total change. I must learn to keep my mouth shut.  
- Mr. J.F. Riberio.

I am isolated within my party.  
- Mr. Kamalapati Tripathi.

I tried very hard not to be vindictive.  
- Mrs Nancy Reagan.

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**NEWSHOUND**



**By Rap**







## Towards A Showdown

**T**he long-anticipated moment has arrived. Now that the election has been announced, it would be known before the end of November who is to govern India for the next five years.

Will the new government last for full five years? This, too, is a question that needs to be asked. Whoever wins is likely to have a narrow margin of majority. In such a situation, instability can occur. If it occurs, the kind of thing that happens in the States will get replicated at the Centre. This can lead to instability and that is what a large number of people fear.

Why was it said that whoever wins is likely to win with a narrow margin? Unlike the last four elections, so far there is no wave of any identifiable kind. There is a feeling of general disenchantment with the regime of Rajiv Gandhi; after all he has blood on his hands and a lack of candour, if not worse, in his soul. This is the general perception. Whether it is right or wrong would be known only when the results are declared. Claims are being made on both sides and it is difficult to take them seriously. There are no ways of judging the public mood. The so called opinion surveys are not conclusive and that is why nothing can be said with certainty.

Meanwhile, it must be said to the credit of the ruling party that in the first few moves it has seized the initiative. For instance, to have announced the election when it was announced, it came as a surprise to most people. A couple of equally smart moves have been made since. While Andhra Pradesh had asked for a simultaneous poll earlier, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka have done so now. In both these states, the decision vested with the Centre.

UP going to the polls means that, to quite an extent, V.P. Singh would get involved in the UP election. To that extent he would not be able to visit other parts of the country. The same can be said about the decision in respect of Karnataka. R.K. Hegde would more or less have to mind the Karnataka front rather than what happens elsewhere.

In a sense it is a battle of wits. So far the ruling party has given evidence of clever planning and unexpected moves. But then the opposition too is likely to come up with a couple of surprises and it is difficult to say how it will turn out.

The stakes are rather high. If Rajiv Gandhi returns to power, the country would have more of the same that it has been getting during the last five years. In other words, we would have distorted planning, continuing disparities, rising prices, kickbacks and what not. The polity cannot afford to have another dose of what it finds, by and large, unacceptable.

This is not to suggest that those in the opposition are angels and will usher in the golden age. Nothing of the kind. Quite a number of them have as inglorious a past as any one else. The only difference would be the change of masters and an end to the dynastic rule. That is a distinct gain and needs to be fought for.

How to do that? There is no simple answer to this problem. The opposition is a combination of parties rather than one party. That is why they have given it the name—the National Front. As a Front, there is no problem about it. But as a party there would be problems. There is the problem of a party symbol, for example. There is also the problem of who will be called upon to form the government. The various opposition groups may get a larger number of seats but, as a political party, the present ruling party might get invited. Should that happen, so many other consequences can follow.

One thing should be definite, however, even if the present ruling party manages to form the government it would neither be stable nor coherent. Maybe the same thing can be said about the opposition. But then, as stated above, the principal difference will lie in this fact, that the existing power structure would have been damaged and it would be necessary to create a new one.

This process of transition cannot but be unsettling. This does not make some people exactly comfortable. But whether comfortable or otherwise, things have a way of asserting themselves and the rest of us would have no choice except to come to terms with what is unavoidably happening.

India is not the place for those people who are looking for peace and tranquility. This is not because anybody wants to disturb peace and upset our sense of tranquility. But it is because during the last four decades the country has been run in such a manner as to accentuate some of the existing disparities and even create fresh tensions. Those are now gathering momentum and the country is on the eve of some kind of a convulsion therefore.

Elections have the advantage of heading off those convulsions. This happens when the alignment between what people think and the outcome of the elections is right. But if the alignment is wrong it cannot be ruled out that convulsions would take their own course. Instead of one big convulsion there may be several small convulsions, one succeeding another and, in a sense, leading on to the next one. It looks as if we are entering some such phase in our history.

# Fundamentalism And Militancy Do Not Mean Separatism

By K.S. Khosla

**M**r. Julius F. Reberio, popularly known as the "super-cop", is leaving Punjab after three and a half years stint a much chastened man.

Mr. Reberio, the high-profile policeman, had come to Punjab in March 1986 with high hopes of solving the terrorist problem in the State. In fact, at one of his first press conferences he had claimed that there were only 500 terrorists in Punjab and he would end the menace in six months. That was not to be. His "bullet-for-bullet" policy produced the opposite result. The number of innocent persons killed in the State in 1985, when the political initiative was taken and the Rajiv-Longowal accord was signed, was 63. The number rose to 520 in 1986, 910 in 1987, 1949 in 1988 and it is expected to exceed 1,000 in 1989. The number of persons killed up to September 30 was 828. There is no doubt that the number of terrorists killed is much more than in 1985 when it was only two. The number of terrorists killed in 1986 was 78, in 1987-328 and in 1988-373. Already up to September 30 this year 570 terrorists, including many hard core ones, have been killed. Besides, there are more than 7,000 terrorists in various jails, of which 1910 were held up to the end of August this year. This, in nutshell, is the balance-sheet of Mr. Reberio's tenure in Punjab.

Naturally, people ask what went wrong with the policy of the 'super-cop', who so successfully dealt with the underworld in Maharashtra. To be fair to Mr. Reberio, he thought that the terrorists in Punjab were a bunch of criminals and it would not be difficult to deal with them if handled firmly. It was much later that he realised, much to his chagrin, that what he was dealing with was politico-religious terrorism, a phenomenon he had not experienced before.

If one studies the track record of Mr. Reberio in Punjab, he has to be admired for his sincerity and straightforwardness and his ability to learn. In fact, he was open and straightforward to a fault, so much so that he has been accused by his detractors of shooting from his mouth than from his hip. But there is no doubt that his sincerity has earned him much goodwill, particularly from the Sikh masses. The earlier hate figure became a benign cop and a friend.

How did this metamorphosis come about? A study of this metamorphosis may hold the key

It was only when Mr. Reberio started touring the rural areas extensively and talking to villagers personally that he realised the dimensions of the problems and the alienation caused by police excesses. He even brought the Chief Constable of London to study the problem who said in one of his press conferences that the police must act tactfully and must not alienate the people whose help was essential in tackling the problem.

to solving the Punjab problem. As stated earlier, initially Mr. Reberio was so confident in eliminating the

menace of terrorism that he went on record to say that if the terrorists had a hit list, the police too had a hit list. That was the beginning of the 'bullet-for-bullet' policy. This policy continued for more than a year. Things came to a head during the popular Akali ministry headed by Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala over the alleged connection with terrorists of Mr. Prem Singh Chandumajra, Cooperation Minister. It was common knowledge then that Mr. Reberio did not take orders from the Chief Minister but dealt directly with the Centre. (It is indeed ironical that when he was advisor to the Governor he felt annoyed at his successor, Mr. K.P.S. Gill, dealing directly with Delhi and not listening to his advice). On this issue the Akali ministry was dismissed and the President's rule was introduced on May 11, 1987. Then Mr. Reberio got a free hand to deal with terrorists, what he had been asking for since long. But the problem of terrorism still remains with us and in a much more sinister form than before.

It was only when Mr. Reberio started touring the rural areas extensively and talking to villagers personally that he realised the dimensions of the problems and the alienation caused by police excesses. He even brought the Chief Constable of London to study the problem who said in one of his press conferences that the police must act tactfully and must not alienate the people whose help was essential in tackling the problem. This was a different Reberio and things came to a head when Mr. Chaman Lal, Inspector General of Police (Border) held a press conference in defiance of service rules and said that he would not follow the "repressive policy" of the present DGP, Mr. K.P.S. Gill. Mr. Chaman Lal is the author of the quotable quote: "The people may not be with the terrorists but they are not with the police also." Since then Mr. Reberio has been advocating the Chaman Lal line but no one in the police administration heeded his advice.

On the contrary, the top brass in the police department turned on him and said that it did not lie in his mouth to say so as he was the author of the 'bullet-for-bullet' policy and also of organizing private gangs of terrorists to infiltrate the terrorists' ranks. Though Mr. Reberio has mellowed with experience, the irony is that his earlier tough policy is continuing. Just when he was becoming useful, he is being sent as India's Ambassador to Rumania to 'cool his heels.'



## BJP Provokes Muslims

Continued from page 1

The CM's advice about "maintaining peace" was disregarded by none other than the Congress-I M.P. from Kota, Mr. Shanti Dhariwal, and that too in the first meeting of the city peace committee in the wake of riots. Mr. Dhariwal, who attended the peace committee meeting held in Kota smashed the mike and walked out of the meeting after shouting at the IG Police, Mr. R.K. Baizal. The committee members came to blows after an heated exchange between the city BJP legislators and the DCC-I general secretary. The meeting then ended abruptly.

Efforts to ignite fire in the volatile Gujarat are on once again. The second week of September has witnessed communal riots in four districts of the State. The trouble-spots were Kheralu in Mehsana, Kanjeri in Kheda, Dholka in Ahmedabad and Megrej in Sabarkantha.

About Kheralu, the "Statesman" (Sept. 17) correspondent has to say the following:

It all started on September 10 when Mr. Suresh Barot, a Hindu activist in Kheralu town of Mehsana district was stabbed to death. Mr. Barot was one of those acquitted in a case of murder of a Muslim youth four years back. His murder is clearly linked with the earlier killing and is a case of revenge being wreaked. But the Vishwa Hindu Parishad volunteers rushed to the spot and have been trying to build up an image of a martyr for Mr. Barot. What is being ignored is that Mr. Barot was earlier exterminated from the town by the police and had several other charges registered against him in police records. The murder of Mr. Barot was followed by looting and

burning of several houses and many incidents of stone throwing in Kheralu town. Nearly 40 families of Muslims of 11 villages around Kheralu town have migrated to far-off places due to fear of attacks.

This is, perhaps, how villains are transformed into heroes.

### IN UP

In Rampur (U.P.) tension per-

It appears as if the RSS, BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena are inventing opportunities for confrontation with Muslims while Muslims have made their position clear on Babri Masjid—that they trust the courts of the country.

sists over the construction of a temple on the debris of a public utility in Mohalla Farrashkhana. It happened on September 3. According to the land-records, the place where the shrine has been constructed comes under "nuzul". Although the sensible administration has disallowed public access to the illegally constructed shrine, the PAC Jawans, it is alleged, offer flowers to the deity every morning

and evening. It seeks to give legitimacy to an unauthorised construction.

This in brief is a survey of "what" and "how" the Rashtrawadis are indulging in double-talk and building up communal tensions throughout the length and breadth of the country.

What the various political parties are doing to diffuse the tensions? The CPI-M is in the forefront. The rest of the national or regional parties are either silent or are banking upon the strategy of the National Front Chief, Mr. V.P. Singh, who wants to sail in two boats. For electoral and perhaps emotional reasons, he does not want to distance from the BJP with which talk of adjustment and understanding is already in top gear.

On the other hand, he has an eye on Muslim vote also. The Muslim electorate has reservations about him because of his bonhomie with the BJP and Mr. Arun Nehru as well as Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan.

It appears as if the RSS, BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena are inventing the opportunities for confrontation with Muslims while Muslims have made their position clear on Babri Masjid—that they trust the courts of the country.

Muslims are refusing to be provoked, as they should. But challenges after challenges are being thrown, both to the government and Muslims. Addressing the Hindu Sammelan in New Delhi on September 22, Mr. Ashok Singhal, the moving spirit behind the Ayodhya shrine controversy, threatened with "majority backlash" in case the said temple was not allowed to be constructed where the Babri Masjid exists.

## UP Criminals Committing Terrorist Activities In Punjab

By FG Correspondent

The Punjab police is hunting for terrorist groups not only in Punjab but also in Uttar Pradesh, reported the newspaper Prabhat (published from Meerut) on 8 October. The newspaper says that about sixty such groups are conducting periodic terrorist activities in Punjab, and recently 14 of them have been smashed by the Punjab police. Members of these gangs enter Punjab to kill and loot people in the garb of terrorists.

The police came to know about this only a year ago when an incident in which four family members were killed and the household was deprived of its treasury in Chandigarh. The police blamed the terrorists at first. But after close investigation, to their surprise, they found that some criminal squads had hand in it. The Punjab police, in this connection, contacted the Ministry of Home Affairs to obtain essential information from these groups' operations in UP.

According to sources the

moment the police sensed that some criminal squads were involved, they became alert and started investigating the matter. The police took in consideration some similar incidents which took place in Ludhiana and Amritsar districts earlier. It was then revealed that terrorists had no hand in these incidents, instead some groups in UP employed people to carry out looting and killing in Punjab. After committing such criminal activities these bad characters take refuge under the menders.

Considering the situation seriously the Punjab police contacted the UP police. In this connection some police officials of Punjab left for UP carrying some important clues. The information that they gathered from these official visits includes a list of 60 groups which are indulged in terrorism-like activities in Punjab. It is also understood that these groups have no connection with the terrorists in Punjab.

## Timing The Elections

Continued from page 1

manipulation of an explosive situation and the ambiguity of the character of its new leadership.

ular, on Mrs. Gandhi's birthday. Lest these events pass and people start talking of corruption and other things elections have been called for 22 November.

### Yearning For Change

Now after five years all these stand exposed. There is a yearning for change all over. In a number of State Assembly elections since 1985, people have shown that given a clear alternative they prefer that than the Congress(I). This happened in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Kashmir Valley, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Haryana and Sikkim.

The ruling party is trying to create an emotional wave again. On 31 October Mrs. Gandhi's death anniversary will be used to arouse the feelings of the people, November 14, Jawaharlal Nehru's birth centenary will be celebrated to remind the electorate of present leader's heritage. On 19 November again efforts will be made to win over the women in partic-

### The Opposition.

As for the opposition it is now or never for it. If even now it cannot come before the people united and determined they will only curse their fate and go for non-performing but stable government. There is every possibility that perhaps after about two decades the November 1989 elections may become issue oriented. There is also a possibility of these elections becoming most violent. Desperation of their position is driving the masses to rebel. But their revolt is fragmented, ill-organized and ill-defined. What is required is an articulation and channelisation. If that does not come from the democratic minded then democracy in India is sure to decay further.

### NEWSHOUND



By Rap

### AN APPEAL

#### HELP THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF NOVEMBER 1984 WIDOWS

The Sikh Forum is providing financial assistance for education of orphan children of the violence since early 1984. Since January 1988, this has been transferred to a Trust named "Citizens' Relief Rehabilitation & Education Fund". This trust is duly registered and have obtained IT exemption under section 80G of IT Act 1961 at present valid till 30 Nov 1990.

The sponsoring member/family/organisation who wish to sponsor one or more children will be provided with full particulars of the child i.e., name, age, sex, present address, grade, school and photograph of the child. Minimum monthly stipend required for educating a child is Rs. 75/- or Rs. 900/- (\$75) annually. The number of children who need this assistance is approximately 1200. We have been able to arrange donors for 910 children as well as for those who may withdraw at the end of the year.

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The draft/cheque should be made in favour of "Citizen Rehabilitation & Education Fund" and sent to 3, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014.



# Get L&T Quick The Reliance Way

By T.K. Ramasamy

This is not about how Larsen and Toubro was gobbled up with effortless ease by Reliance. Nor is this about the sound or unsound assumptions behind the Bombay High Court ruling in favour of this painless corporate ingestion. This is about the emerging corporate ethos and financial ethics in the country.

To start with, here are the basic facts, in the broadest of outlines. L&T is a well-managed company which, among others, fabricates ultra-precision stainless steel boilers for the nuclear reactor in Kalpakkam. With the kind of expertise which this impressive job demonstrates and with the kind of demand and image such contracts ensure, L & T suddenly becomes the most desirable company to own. And Mr Dhirubhai Ambani of Reliance desires to own it.

There is one hitch though. It costs money, tonnes of it, to own a blue chip company like L & T. And Reliance did not have that kind of money, although it is confident of raising it from willing sources. Further, if Reliance had gone through the normal route—acquiring shares in open stock market operations—the ground would have caved in. The purchase of lakhs and lakhs of shares would have carried the price to dizzy heights and made the take-over unattractive.

Anyway, Mr Ambani perhaps did not think of all these complex issues at all. He is a simple man and his approach has always been simple, direct and deadly. He, therefore, asks his political friends in Delhi to work out a get—L & T quick way, with minimum fuss and maximum success chance. Promptly enters Mr Paramjit Singh of the Bank of Baroda.

Bob (the abbreviation for the Bank of Baroda) goes about the job at break-neck speed. It reads and re-reads a recommendation of the Abid Hussein committee report on streamlining the stock market operations. There it finds the key to its next move. The committee had called for the establishment of credible financial institutions to provide a safe outlet for small investors. Who else can take the initiative in this noble national task than Bob?

Thus is born the Bob Fiscal Services with a capital of Rs 10 crore. The story quickens at this stage. L & T shares, some 39 lakh of them, are promptly transferred by government-owned financial institutions like the LIC, UTI, etc. to Bob Fiscal. The operation is justified on the ground that the newly born public service set-up should put its best foot forward and L&T shares spell both growth and mature thinking.

Fine. Infact, fantastic. But within

a few weeks Bob Fiscal changes its mind. It unloads this huge volume of shares on a single broker and ends its brief flirtation with the high-growth L & T shares. This is miracle number one. The second is that the change of so many lakhs of shares, twice within a short time, does not cause any ripple in the market. In physical terms, it is like a huge flood roaring down the Beas and not one villager getting to know about it!

Now miracle number three unfolds. On the day the lone stock broker takes delivery of the shares, L & T names four Ambani associates, including a son of the formidable Dhirubhai, on the Board of Directors. After a few days of media and market speculation, Mr Dhirubhai Ambani steps out, takes the bow and sits on the gilded Chairman's chair. L & T has gone under the wings of Reliance and the midwife, if that is the right term, has been the newly floated Bob Fiscal.

What is wrong in all this? Nothing, except half a dozen unusual decisions and deeds. Reliance gets to own a company without investing a naya paisa. On the contrary, it later persuades L&T to invest money in itself. It is unheard of. The only example one can think of is from mythology. Rajas, we are told, would feast *rajgurus*, lavish costly gifts on them and, at the end of it all, offer them *dakshina* (cash) to express gratitude for accepting the invitation and the meal. L & T gave itself up to Reliance and later offered several crores of rupees as a token compensation for the trouble of owning it.

Two, Bob Fiscal is at first impatient to possess L&T shares and almost immediately it gets impatient to get rid of them. The unprecedented transaction does not benefit L & T, does not benefit the shareholders, does not benefit the public sector financial institutions who were the original investors. It benefits only one person, Mr Ambani. Even for so shrewd a businessman like Mr Ambani, it is all understandable and unbelievable.

Wait a minute. It is understandable in a way. Bob Fiscal boss's son is a business partner of Reliance and this association gets him a monthly profit of lakhs of rupees. Not every banker's son earns that kind of money, and rightly so. Not every banker floats a subsidiary which suspiciously looks like being designed to help only one exalted individual, rather one high-profile company.

Three, it is not simply a question of one Ambani versus one Paramjit Singh. A whole chain of public sector financial institutions are involved; the Government (the one in Delhi) is involved. The newly created Stock Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is involved (what was it doing when the massive give-and-take was taking place seem-

ingly outside the confines of stock exchanges?). The Reserve Bank of India is involved (what is it going to do about this utterly inexplicable business deal of Bob Fiscal?). A whole set of investigating agencies are involved (do they treat the Reliance coup as a normal banking and share market activity?).

Figures are not important and that is why all those mind-boggling sums of money (running into tens and tens of crores) have been kept back. What is important is the moral of the story. It is this, chillingly, this. Have friends in high political places in Delhi, and become super rich.

The Reliance could not have pulled it off without powerful support in the Union Government. Mr Paramjit Singh would not have done what he did without political and family prompting. The Gov-

ernment would not have given the green signal unless some key members are confident of their interests being served. SEBI will not be so silent and powerless except at the bidding of the powers-that-be. Ditto for the RBI and the much-touched detectives.

To put it differently. A few men, with the powers that the democratic system gives them, come under the spell of an ambitious businessman with astonishing acumen. A Malleable banker is roped in, public money and the shares lying with public financial institutions are diverted to build an empire, or help an existing empire to expand in a phenomenal manner.

To put it still differently, public mandate is distorted, public trust is violated, public funds are brazenly misused and, ultimately, the

public is cheated.

At one time, such operations used to take place quietly and infrequently, involving small sums of money. Now it is done on the front pages of newspapers, signalling the shift of an industrial kingdom from one stable to another, and flouting all canons of financial and industrial norms.

This piece is not about L & T and Reliance. It is about a new trend. And there are more L & Ts and more Ambanis waiting to take their bow. The new breed of Tatas, Birlas, Modis and Thapars belong to this category.

The political-corporate-banking nexus can be a menace. (Remember Mr Umesh Katre?) The country should thank Mr Ambani for unveiling this new facet of nascent Indian capitalism.

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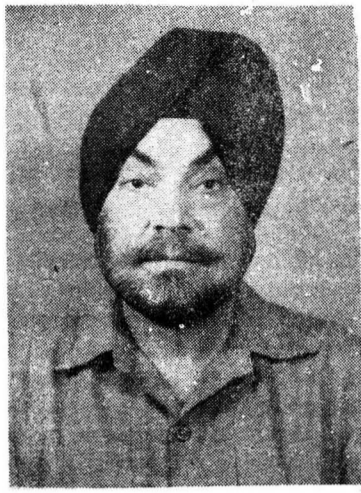
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By Dr. O.S. Prem

# Guru Nanak And

Guru Nanak, a true benefactor, a true helper in distress, is the true prophet of the modern age, in every sense of the world. He was born in 1469, at a place called Talwandi, now called Nan-Kana-Sahib in Pakistan. It is said that the new born infant laughed like an adult at his birth. The wise of the community heard celestial music from the heavens. The call came unto him, from yonder lands to save the weary world which was on fire.

**A**mong all the saints and seers, who have tried to banish whims and superstitions, Guru Nanak will stand out for all time. He exposed the hollowness of rites and rituals that had taken the place of religion, that had permeated the faith. Guru Nanak sought to replace the blind beliefs, and false beliefs by reason. Though the religious conflicts and controversies have not died down, he made the people aware of the true purpose of religion. Guru Nanak preached oneness of humanity and common fatherhood of God.

The individuality of such a man, grandeur of his personality would undoubtedly have been enticingly captivating. The charismatic beauty surfaced wonderfully well on every occasion, at all places. His touch, his word, his sight would alter cruel robbers into humble friends—friends of humanity, carnivorous man-eaters like 'Kodah' into humane social beings of the world, superstitious ascetics into devoted selfless saints and tyrants into humble servants of society.

The philosophy of Guru Nanak is based on monotheism and

humanitarian service—a single God and service to humanity. In the very first word of The Holy Granth (Holy Book of Sikhs), Guru Nanak says.

There is one God.  
His name is Truth.  
The all-pervading creator  
without fear, without hatred  
Immortal, unborn, self-existent.  
True from the beginning  
True through out the ages  
True even now—Nanak  
Time shall ever be!

"Truth is above everything. But higher still is the living truth". The truthful way of living is more important. Guru Nanak showed us the path to tread in this world, to live through in life like a lotus.

"The lotus in water, is not wet  
So the water bird in the stream  
The man shall live in the world  
untouched  
Meditate and recite the name  
O' Lord Supreme".

"I would be true for there are those who trust me  
I would be brave for there is much to dare  
I would be strong for there is

much to suffer  
I would be friend of all, the foe,  
the friendless  
I would look up, and laugh and  
love and lift."

For most of us in this world, in this life, it is tit for tat. A tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye. For a few of us, some of us, it is—to err is human, to forgive divine.

For Guru Nanak, "Do good unto others, even if they err, even if they betray thee, even if they deceive thee".

The evidence goes without saying that Nanak was a lettered person and he knew more than one language and more than one tradition of religion and mysticism. He came on the crest of a synthetic trend represented by Kabir as its fulfilment and had behind him a full heritage of saints with a common language and idiom. He met and mingled with *sadhus* of various different approaches.

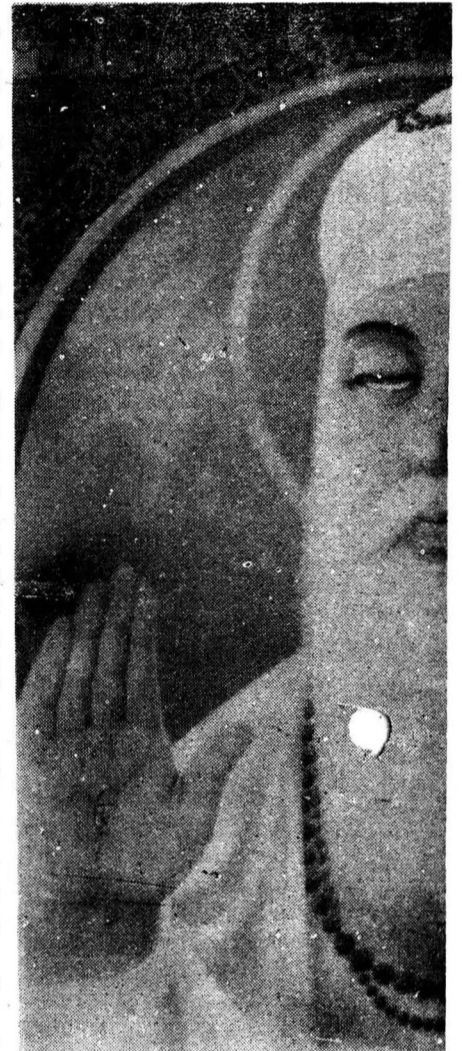
Says Nanak, "The light which is everything is Thine, O Lord of Light. From its brilliance everything is brilliant."

The supreme which is All-Powerful is indeed formidable; it controls and ordains everything in the creation. It is out of fear.

"In fear the winds and breezes ever blow  
In fear flow hundreds and thousands of rivers  
In fear fire performeth its forced labour  
In fear the earth is pressed by its burden."

Everything below that Supreme, is caught in fear. It alone is fearless. God has destined fear for everyone. The fools go round and round like blind ones led by the blind.

If he visited a place it changed



into a place of worship; the deer-like ignorance taking to heels at his appearance like a lion.

Is there any parallel in the annals of the world, of Balol's faith and devotion! It was a strange, unbelievable, unusual extraordinary love—"like a bee poised a dawn-lit honey rose." For sixty winters since Guru left Iran, the

## Urdu: A Uni

By Lt. Col. Manohar


**M**aking Urdu a second official language in Uttar Pradesh has not been welcomed by some people. And this impression has been conveyed through political channels by some organizations including BJP. The agitation on account of the Urdu Bill passed in the State Assembly caused riots and loss of lives and property and incitement of hatred among Hindus and Muslims, who otherwise were enjoying cordial relations in all the fields.

The main reason being advocated for the opposition to the Bill is that the Congress(I) has adopted this for wooing Muslim voters. This might be true in respect of the timing of introduction of the Bill. But the basic fact cannot be ignored that Urdu had to be given a respectable place in the state, which over a long period had been recognised by all sec-

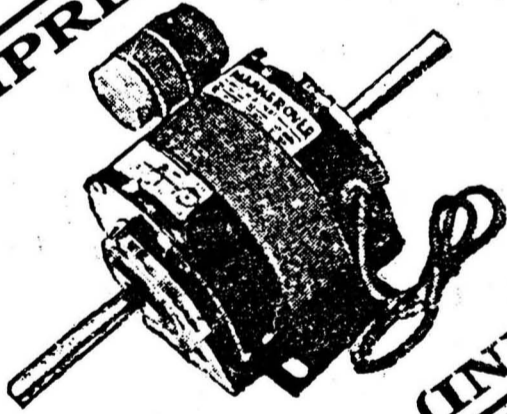
tions of the people. It would have been a wiser step to nullify the Congress (I) ulterior motive by adopting some other strategy, instead of opposing the Urdu Bill in a manner that dragged in bloody riots causing heavy damage to national unity and sense of brotherhood.

It is a fact that Urdu in U.P., Bihar, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir, prior to the partition of India, was enjoying very high status in the realm of Indian languages and was respected for its richness and suitability of meeting all occasions's requirements. Urdu has given a lot to Hindi and Punjabi literature which has in turn made these languages rich, sweet and a vehicle of forceful expression. In the light of the services

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# His Preachings



enraged, in anger, in wrath, in fury. They came in hundreds. Guru Nanak asked, "Is there a man who deals not in flesh?"

"Man conceived in flesh, born out of flesh, breathes in flesh, sucks from breasts of flesh, eats with tongue of flesh, mouth of flesh, marries flesh and reproduces in flesh".

"What would you say of those, who do not touch animal food, but devour man's flesh and suck human blood?" All that we eat for pleasure is wrong; All that we eat to live, to subsist, is right.

Guru Nanak has been a messenger of good-will, love peace and humility. His noble faith would influence the religious, political and social beliefs of countless, innumerable people of the world. His teaching art was unique:

"Bronze is bright and shining  
Rub it and it turns black,  
And a hundred washings can't  
remove it  
They are sajjans, they are true  
friends  
whose friendship bears the  
mark of sincerity  
who are present in a friend's  
hour of need."

Sajjan was overwhelmed when confronted with lucid pictures of sins, committed by him, and realized the horrors of his dark deeds and sins. The most remarkable aspect of Nanak's teachings is that not only is there repentance and purification, but also a new ray of hope, lit in the heart. Thus his message is always complete and full, a life of poise and composure where both pleasure and pain go hand in hand.

There are two ways, either turn a man of God or man of world.

And we weave into the web of greed, the mirage of self and turn to a wrong path. Guru Nanak preached all his life, for more than a quarter of a century, covering more than 36,000 miles, through the jungles, rivers, mountains, length and breadth of vast regions, not only in India, but far away in the neighbouring countries. He did so persistently and with sincerity, in very simple language of the masses. These basic things that enlighten the mind, purify the heart and sublimate soul, make a person a man of God. Guru Nanak says.

He who is true is contented:  
He is devoid of greed and hatred  
has no evil desires,  
He controls his self; distinguishes  
right from wrong. He follows  
His  
dictates physically as well as  
spiritually  
Such a man is true disciple.  
A true disciple's brief never  
ends, he keeps His name ever in  
heart and on the lips. To help the  
society from his own hard work, is

his ideal. The faith Guru Nanak initiated has no end. It is our duty to carry out and carry on his work.

A true Sikh is a follower of Guru Nanak's thoughts. He is a disciple, leads a life of discipline which means a training. Sikhism is a training in life, a path of life, a way of life, it could be any prayer, in any language to 'God' to 'Allah,' to Bhagwan, to 'Waheguru'. But the prayer should be in true meditation. Guru Nanak taught us the true prayer and true thoughts followed by true actions.

It has to be a life of simplicity, sincerity, service before self and sacrifice; without ego which leads to anger and wrath, lust and greed, pride and vanity. Kindness to all and humility from the guiding force of his life.

Guru Nanak, a true philosopher, a seer, a saint, a revolutionary and a social reformer gave his message of love and peace. Truth and non-violence, self-restraint and self-sacrifice. He worked for a new social order, of a classless and casteless society. He worked for emancipation of women. He

worked for a true democratic order wherein all the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the down trodden and the elevated, the big and the small, men and women would sit together, pray together and eat together.

Guru Nanak made his presence in this dark and dull, drab and dreary world, torn with conflicts. It was a time when the world was facing a spiritual and social crisis, chaos and confusion. He rescued humanity from blind beliefs, false faiths, whims, oddities, superstitions, rites and rituals. He lifted mankind from darkness to light, ignorance to knowledge, falsehood to truth.

*The author has two MAs and PhD in Education from USA. He is principal of Guru Harkishan Public School, Shahdra, Delhi. And he is also credited with the 'National Integration Award' for 1989. He is also author of several articles on Education, Health, Social & Cultural and Literary nature in various journals and newspapers.*

Baiol rested on the Mastord.

teachings of Guru Nanak unique and strange, but by amazing and astounding ways. Once at 'Kurukshetra' Punjab, a holy place, a place and that too on a day of eclipse, Guru Nanak his disciples to cook animal animal flesh. People were

## ing Factor

Singh (Retd.)

red by Urdu there should been no opposition to it any circumstances for get-tatus of second language in

would be an admir-enture if we capitalize on the of developing those lan-gues which are common in both and Pakistan such as Urdu, bi, Sindhi and Bengali. It ook odd, but it must be stated to Muslim throughout India shown any disrespect or lack thusiasm in learning Hindi adopting Devnagri script. why others should not recip-

s unfortunate that language heir scripts are being com-lized and thus creating hur-in the development of our

national languages, the real national wealth promoting prosperity in all the regions in a big land like India which has many regional cultures, religions and languages with their own identities. Therefore, language should not be restricted to a particular section of people, but each and every person must be pride to learn it and make use of it. Therefore, Urdu in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh should also be provided state facilities in its learning and useage. And it should be made a compulsory part of atleast school examinations.

Wisdom should work to desist us from adopting communal attitude to any language. Take the wider base to develop mutual respectability to all languages for happiness and prosperity in our country and free it from the bloody sheet it is wrapped in.

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DIWALI

# Golden Flames Of Earthen Saucers

By Neera Swaroop

**T**he month of October is one rolling season of festivals, feasts, fasts, fun and frolic. Beginning with Gandhi Jayanti the season of festivity culminates in Diwali. This festival like any other forges the entire country into one entity, in which every Indian feels a sense of participation and enjoyment. The very name seems to exude warmth, a sense of contentment and well-being. Derived from the Sanskrit word *Deepawali*, Diwali literally means a row of lights and it is celebrated on the evening of *Kartik Amavasya*, the no-moon-day. This year it will be celebrated on October 29.

festivals ordained for the Hindus and is exclusively meant for the commercial classes—Vaishyas. The other three being *Sawan Purnima* for Brahmans (intellectuals), *Dussehra* for Kshatriyas (warriors) and *Holi* for the Shudras (labour class).

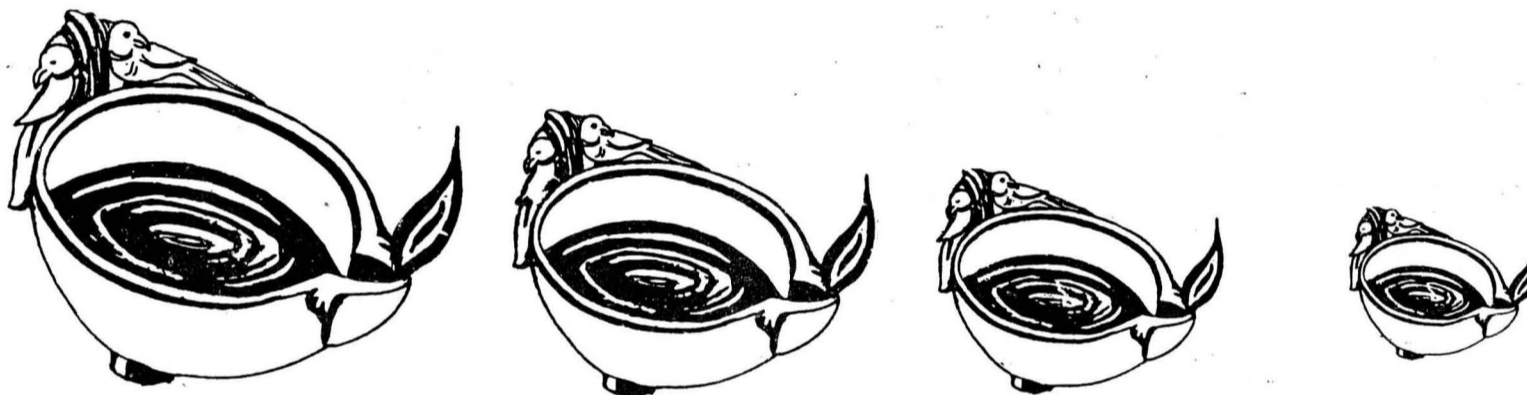
Although the origin of Diwali is shrouded by the dark mists of history nevertheless, it is a fact that this particular festival is celebrated by nearly all the people of the country. The mythological theme behind it however, varies in different parts of the country.

In South India and Assam, it is celebrated with Lord Krishna's victory over the demon Narakasura of Pragjyotishpura, known as the demon of filth. This demon of filth is possibly the south-west mon-

As the darkness starts settling in, preparations to pay obeisance to Lakshmi start. All the members of the family are expected to be home at this hour to welcome the visit of the Goddess. The family prays together for a year of continued prosperity. Once the solemnity is over the family steps out to light lamps.

clothes as Diwali connotes cleanliness. Weeks before the festival the cleaning and sprucing of homes begins. Each house offers a feast for the eyes to devour. New clothes are worn, greetings, sweets and gifts are exchanged. The entire morning is spent in the continuous stream of giving and taking. After this the preparations for the evening starts.

As the darkness starts settling in, preparations to pay obeisance to Lakshmi start. All the members of the family are expected to be home at this hour to welcome the visit of the Goddess. The family prays together for a year of continued prosperity. Once the solemnity is over the family steps out to light lamps. Traditionally five lamps are lit in selected spots which must be kept compulsarily bright. They are the *tulsi mandap* in the courtyard where this sacred plant is nurtured, the darkest corner of the animal shed, the platform around the family well or water source, the corner of the garden or the bottom of the *peepal* (banyan) tree and the shed where working implements are kept. The custom still prevails in the rural areas.



A number of theories, both scientific and sociological, have been advanced for its origin. According to one belief, Diwali originated in the primitive man's obsession to drive away darkness and evil spirits. Hence the cracker cacophany and lighting up of the home and heart. Some say that it is a facet of the sun-worship. A way to charm the sun in order to speed up its return to the northern hemisphere. Yet another belief pronounces it to be one of the four

soon that deluges a good part of the country creating havoc and spreading misery.

For some this festival recalls the gambling bout that the Lord Shiva had with his consort Parvati and in which he was defeated by her. One legend ordains that on this day Lord Vishnu sent Bali in the form of Yamana into the nether world. Bali proved to be so generous that he excelled all, even the gods in merit. His boldness incurred the wrath of the gods. To

punish Bali the Lord himself descended on the earth in the form of a dwarf Vamana and asked Bali for a boon. To grant him land as much as his three steps could cover. The moment Bali gave his assent the Lord assumed a gigantic form. His first step covered the world, the second covered the upper world and the third step he kept on the head of the demon and pushed him into patal restoring peace to the world.

The most popular belief has it

that this was the day when Lord Rama triumphantly returned to his Kingdom Ayodhya after an exile of fourteen long eventful years, which included the defeat of the demon king Ravana on Dussehra Day. To welcome back their beloved king the people enlightened their homes and rejoiced greatly.

The festival is also associated with the Goddess Lakshmi, the Hindu Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity. The story goes that the Goddess will not enter any home which is unlit. Therefore, every home however humble is jeweled with thousands of lights—the steady golden flames of oil-filled earthen saucers, flickering glow of wax *diyas* and candles, and the cheerfulness of electric and neon lights, making Diwali literally a *Festival of Lights*.

Diwali is of special significance to the business community. This day demarkates the beginning of the commercial year. The businessmen start the year with a clean slate in the hope that the Goddess Lakshmi would bless their ventures with even more prosperity.

The morning of Diwali itself dawns with a sense of expectancy. People rise early and take their bath, and wear fresh new

Then comes the time for the children to freakout. The whole country vibrates with the deafening noise of the crackers and sparklers. And high overhead against the backdrop of darkness one can see myriads of flashing fireworks soaring to the sky. Every gesture reflecting the inner jubilation.

As the oil lamps dim and burn out and the fireworks fizzle into the darkness, the elders sit down to play card games. For some it is only a game whereas for others it assumes the proportion of gambling, a way to earn quick buck. In the odd hours of the morning they can be seen sneaking up to their homes.

Celebrations do not come to an end on the next day. This day commemorates Lord Vishwakarma, artisan of the gods and artificer of their weapons. Craftsmen and workers wash and clean their tools and worship their implements in thanks giving and hope for another year of continued prosperity at their hardwork. After a couple of days comes *Bhai Dooj* or Brothers Day, when sisters pray for the long life of their brothers. With the coming of this day all the celebrations come to a close.

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# The Prime Minister's Judgement

By Kuldip Nayar

The appointment of A.N. Ray as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1973 and the supersession of three senior judges, K.S. Hegde, I.M. Shelat and A.N. Grover, was a watershed in the history of the Indian judiciary. Some of the new appointments to the Supreme Court have also made a history of sorts because seldom before has the ladle of selection reached the dregs of the legal profession.

The government's justification at that time was that, while appointing the Chief Justice of India, it had to take into account "his basic outlook, his attitude to life and his politics". This time there is no explanation; none is considered necessary because the standard of appointments has been consistently so bad that the public has stopped reacting. But this has only encouraged the government to elevate any Tom, Dick and Harry to the bench.

Take the new appointments. It is apparent that one from the Sunni, who constitute a majority among the Indian Muslims, had to be appointed because the sitting Muslim judge is a Bohra. Only once before had a retired judge been appointed but this time it had to be done in order to give representation to women. A scheduled caste man was a "must" because of the ruling party's electoral compulsions. And one appointment has gone to a person who was rejected by the government three years ago when P.N. Bhagwati, the then Chief Justice of India, had commended his name.

However indifferent the appointments, Chief Justice E.S. Venkataramiah cannot escape the responsibility. After Bhagwati's judgement on the judges; case that consultation of the Chief Justice was necessary, not concurrence, the government's say has become final. Venkataramiah was one of the judges who had concurred with Bhagwati. But, had he opposed the appointments, the Rajiv Gandhi government could not have ignored him.

Obviously, there were pressures on Venkataramiah; he reportedly took a trip to Chandigarh to assess the merit of the respective judges of the Punjab and Haryana High Court from where two of them have been elevated to the Supreme Court bench.

But of what use was the trip if he had to ultimately accept what he was told. State Law Minister H.R. Bhardwaj, who is in touch with the Prime Minister's Secretariat, is the person who makes the selection. The rest is a mere exercise. Some of the names, which have raised several eyebrows, were bandied about by Bhardwaj's men in Delhi, many days before the official announcement.

The principle that Kumaramangalam tried to lay down—a judge had to be a person whose social philosophy should conform to that of ruling government of the day—has not withstood the pressure of public opinion. But the Congress has been able to appoint the party activists as judges. No wonder, even briefless lawyers make the bench if they are able to ingratiate themselves with the establishment

Law Minister B. Shankaranand was reportedly ill when two new names were added overnight. (Asok Sen, former Law Minister, used to say he would never see the papers relating to the appointments and transfers of judges because Bhardwaj dealt with them directly "in consultation with the Prime Minister's secretariat".)

Venkataramiah, who has acquitted himself well otherwise, appears to have opted for any judge instead of waiting for the right one. His obsession with clearance of the arrears of cases has had the better of him. Soon after the oath-taking ceremony of the new judges, he said that 3,000 cases had been pending before the Supreme Court for more than 10 years. True, but what kind of disposal of cases it would be if the judges appointed are found lacking in calibre and competence?

Subba Rao was the Chief Justice when Mrs Indira Gandhi, then the Prime Minister, sent the Home Secretary to him to request to appoint a particular Christian woman from Kerala as a Supreme Court judge. Subba Rao reportedly said that it would be a reflection on Indian women if he were to do so. Let them wait until they could throw up the right type of woman, he remarked.

Similarly, S.M. Sikri, former Chief Justice of India, threatened to quit because one name was sought to be forced on him. Incidentally, when this name was pressed by the then Law Minister at a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee, Mrs Gandhi inquired whether the Chief Justice had given his approval. After learning that he had not, she said the person would not be appointed.

It was only when Mrs Gandhi had the Congress party split in the name of "social commitment" did she move against the judiciary and use the same words, "social commitment", to discipline it. With the help of S. Mohan Kumaramangalam, an ex-Communist lawyer who was the Railway Minister, she set on the course of demoralising the judges. The

supersession in 1973 sent them the message. Still most Chief Justices of her regime were able to resist the imposition of really bad eggs.

Why Venkataramiah has caved

in is a surprise. He has only a few months before his retirement. And he is not a person who can be tempted. Had he dug in, he would have come out of the ordeal with glory. Now the country may have to pay a heavy price. One of the new appointees may well retire as the Chief Justice of India.

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Continued on page 10

## NEWSHOUND

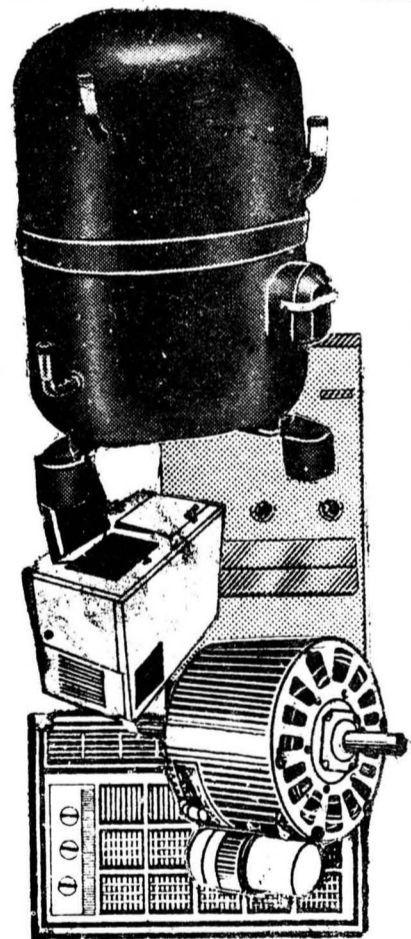


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**PM's Judgement**

*Continued from page 9*

I am not arguing that judges should live in ivory towers. But I am against their shedding the proverbial judicial aloofness. They have to keep a distance from politicians and others who can cast shadows on their reputation. The 14th Law Commission report has given examples to show how judges compromise their position and prefer to be seen in the precincts of government houses.

In fact, the judges in Pakistan under the martial law regime of General Zia-ul-Haq showed far more guts than most judges in India did during the emergency. Although Zia overlooked the judges' shoulders, the verdict on Bhutto's execution was four to three. The likes of H.R. Khanna, who upheld the habeas corpus petition during the Emergency are rare; before he delivered the judgement, he knew he would be superseded and still he did not flinch.

Nonetheless, among the wonders of our national birth none has been more astonishing and rewarding than the way in which the early judges of the Supreme Court performed their duty. They have given us whatever is left of the majesty of law. There was an awe which no government of those days tried to challenge.

When the Bihar zamindari abolition act was struck down in early 1951, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to

the Chief Ministers: "it is obvious that the interpretation of the Constitution is a function of our superior courts. We have to respect the decision of the court, for not to do so is to strike at the very root of our constitutional structure. The executive and the judiciary have to pull together, even though they function separately and independently..."

Today when the executive looks for pliable judges and expects them to subscribe to the philosophy of the ruling party, one feels how far the government has strayed from Nehru's views. There is the general belief that an independent judiciary is not what the people in power want. Rajiv Gandhi, unlike his mother, has not superseded judges and has so far respected the criteria of seniority in appointing the Chief Justice of India. But his appointment of judges either to the High Courts or the Supreme Court often smack of favouritism and politics.

I recall when I interviewed Hegde, Shelat and Grover after their supersession, they warned me: "Next is your turn—the Press's." They turned out to be right when Rajiv Gandhi brought the defamation bill to silence his critics. But the government underestimated the unity of Pressmen. The Rajiv Gandhi government was forced to withdraw the bill as the Farooq Abdullah government in Jammu and Kashmir has been to do so now.

It pains me to say that the lawyers do not show even a semblance of resistance when the

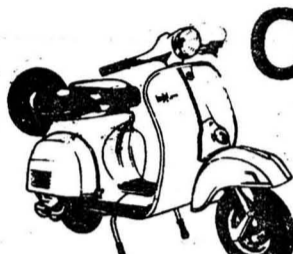

worst type of judges are imposed on them. Atleast they can agitate for the appointment of a judicial council for the selection of judges. The council should have the Chief

Justice of India, the Law Minister, two senior Supreme Court judges, two retired Chief Justices of India and the Leader of the Opposition as its members. Unless the mode

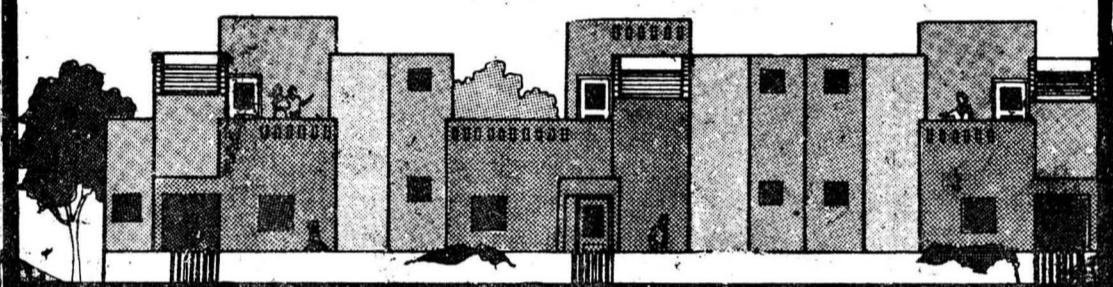
of selection is changed, the judiciary or, for that matter, the country will continue to suffer from unqualified judges and biased judgments.


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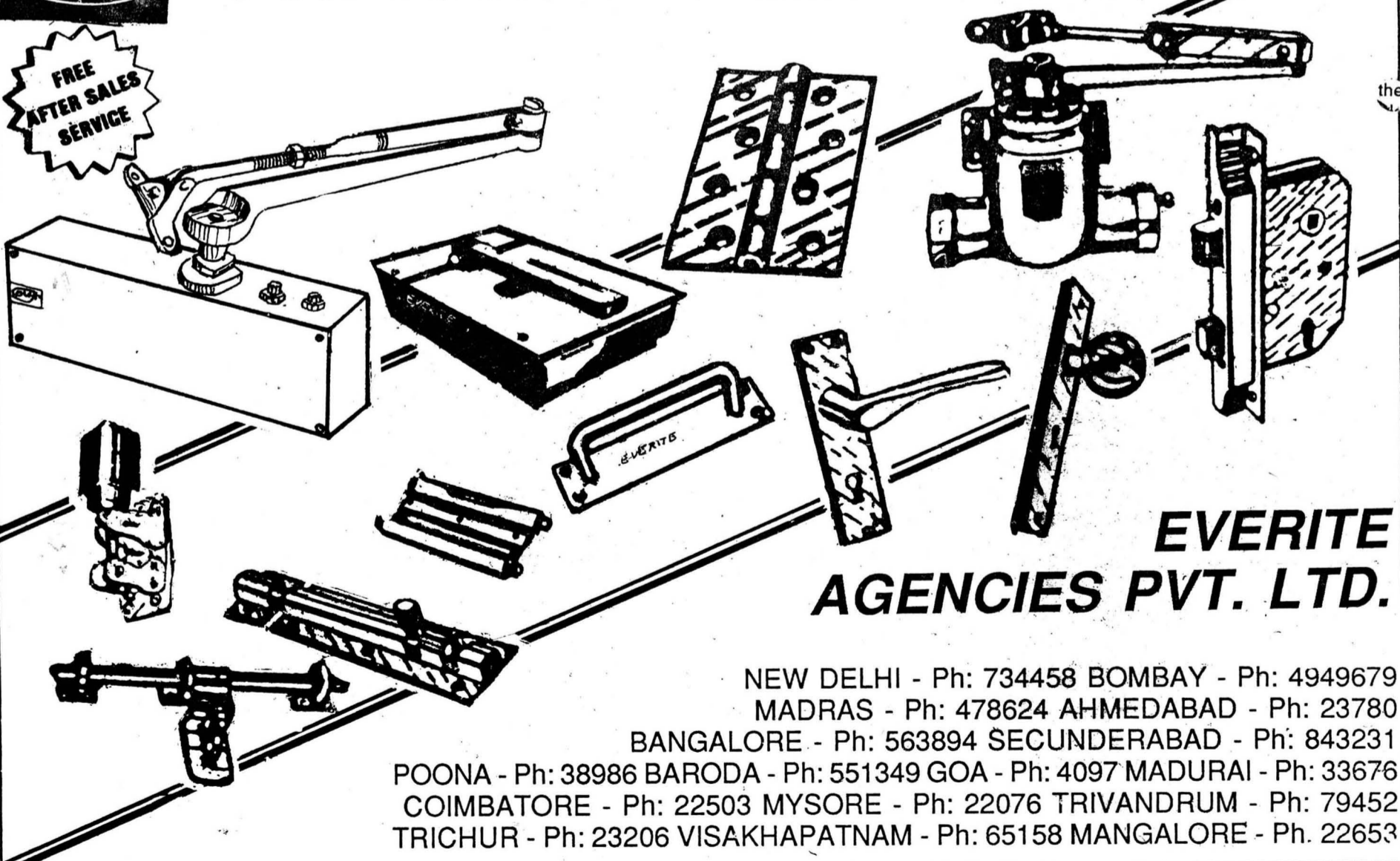
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By Bharat Dogra

## Growing Unequal Base

**"W**orking for economic equality means leveling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of Nation's wealth on the one hand and the levelling up of the Semi-starved naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and hungry millions persists, the contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class remains."—Mahatma Gandhi.

The most important feature of Indian society and economy is inequality. In the post-independence period India embarked on economic development on an unequal base and this inequality has not been significantly reduced despite several promises made and some programmes actually taken up with such an objective.

As agriculture remains the only or the most important source of livelihood for most of the people in our country, it is important to look at the trends in the distribution of agricultural land holdings.

According to a study by A. Venkateswaralu, 'Regional variations in agrarian structure 1953-54 to 1970-71', the landownership data for 1953-54 (NSS 8th round) give a gini coefficient of 0.676, while those for 1970-71 (NSS 26th round) give a gini coefficient of 0.675.

Table 1 gives the distribution of land holdings and farm income while Table 2 gives the distribution of assets in rural as well as urban areas. From these data the fact of an unequal base and the perpetuation of this base over the years clearly comes out.

This inequality has been further promoted, not reduced, by fiscal policies, which have relied more and more on indirect taxes and deficit financing. Economist Prabhat Patnaik writes about the pattern of plan financing, "it was not that a part of the surplus accruing to the propertied classes out of a given social product was to be taken up by the state for stepping up the overall rate of investment;

rather, the surplus in the hands of the propertied classes was to remain intact, and the state was to finance its enlarged investment by snatching an additional amount from the working people, which would constitute an addition to the existing surplus."

Further, he asserts, "The share of private surplus in total social product did not merely remain intact or stabilize after an initial increase; it actually tended to increase persistently over time, partly through budgetary concessions of all kinds".

At the lower levels the reasons of the failure of the weaker section to rise can be seen, among other things, in the failure of land reforms, the inability to mobilize the rural poor and other unorganized section in an effective way, the decay of occupational groups like artisans, fishermen and forest produce gatherers. At the upper level there is the failure to control monopoly houses and shady financial dealers of various hues and their political contacts. At the upper-most levels, the biggest growth is likely to be in black money abroad or in black money foreign transactions, which is not even shown in the income inequality data.

The International Monetary Fund has estimated secret Indian deposits in Swiss banks at Rs. 1332 crore (or \$ 1076 million). This estimate does not cover the secret deposits in other foreign accounts.

It was reported recently (The Times of India December 13, 1986) "Accumulation of black foreign exchange has kept making a quantum jump year after year with the whopping increase in imports of materials and machinery, specially defence supplies. Decision-makers at all levels are involved in such deals, the commission in larger deals being negotiated at the highest levels. Everyone, including politicians, bureaucratic decision makers, the lower level officials, all get their cut in the deal, some in black money at home, others in black foreign exchange overseas. While such practices must have always been common, their scale and volumes have grown specially since the early 1970s."

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF FARM INCOME BY FARM HOUSEHOLD LAND SIZE CLASSIES IN 1975

Farm household land size Classes	Percentage shares in			Net crop and farm wage income	Livestock income
	Rural agricultural population	Area operated	Crop output		
Landless	12.3	0.0	0.0	6.2	4.6
Sub-marginal	18.6	3.0	4.2	11.6	9.8
Marginal	15.7	4.0	5.7	11.2	17.4
Small	18.5	12.4	14.9	17.7	19.4
Medium	16.3	19.8	22.0	19.7	21.4
Large	10.7	20.4	20.0	15.4	16.1
Very large	7.9	40.0	33.2	18.2	12.1
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The figures in the table are synthetic estimates based on diverse sources and assumptions, and should be taken as crude approximations.

Source—'Indian Agriculture in 2000' Economic and Political Weekly, annual number March 1981, paper by I. Ali, B.M. Desai, R. Radhakrishna and V.S. Vyas.

Table 2

Percentage Distribution of Households and Assets: 1981-82

Asset Group (Rupees)	Rural Households		Urban Households		All India	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
Upto 10,000	38.5	4.5	44.8	3.6	40.0	4.3
10,000 to 1 lakh	53.6	49.9	45.6	40.1	51.6	47.3
1 lakh and above	7.9	45.6	9.6	56.3	8.4	48.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source—Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, Vol. XL. NO. 6, June 1986.

A = Percentage of households in each asset group.

B = Share of value of assets in each group (per cent) to value of total assets.

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# Quality Is The Watchword

By H.S.Nagaraja Sharma

The characteristics of international marketing have been undergoing some profound changes in the post war era. Earlier, the emphasis was on competitive pricing in order to bag a good share of the export market. But the world export scenario has been witnessing a pronounced shift in emphasis from price to quality for securing a substantial chunk of the international market. India with its reputation of being a credible exporter of commodities and services was one of the first among the developing countries to be influenced by the quality consciousness wave sweeping the shores of world export markets. This is more due to ever growing emphasis on augmenting our export earnings and concerted efforts to increase the volume of our exports.

India's export basket covers a

wide range of commodities varying from food and agriculture items to engineering goods, chemicals,

jute, coir and footwear. Most of them are subjected to pre-shipment inspection for quality as per Export (Quality Control & Inspection) Act passed in 1963. The purpose of this Act is to prevent export of sub-standard goods and to satisfy the needs of the foreign buyers in terms of quality requirements demanded by them. In cases where functional safety or health hazards are involved, minimum standards have been prescribed. So far over 1050 items have been brought under the ambit of compulsory pre-shipment inspection.

### Unremitting Efforts For Quality Control

The Export Inspection Council (EIC) which has been established under the Act advises the government in regard to measures to be taken for quality control and

pre-shipment inspection. EIC has under its administrative and technical control five Export Inspection Agencies, one each at Bombay, Calcutta, Cochin, Delhi and

are equipped with testing facilities.

The inspection of commodities is carried out in three ways, namely, Consignment-wise Inspection, in Process Quality

and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) have already recognised QDC as a regional centre for imparting training on quality control and pre-shipment inspection. A number of officers from developing countries from the Asia-Pacific region have already been trained in Export Inspection. To ensure complete satisfaction of discerning buyers, quality complaint cells have been set up at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bombay, Calcutta, Cochin, Delhi, Kanpur and Madras. These cells arrange for prompt examination of overseas quality complaints and necessary follow-up action. Wherever necessary the standards and inspection procedures are also improved upon. Export Inspection Agencies also issue certificates of origin under the generalised system of preferences. Besides voluntary inspection is undertaken in respect of items not covered under the Act at the specific request of the overseas buyer the exporter.

For EIC, quality is the watchword. It has been rendering useful service to the Indian exporters to improve their business through quality products for the last 25 years. When the EIC was born in 1963, only a handful of commodities were being exported after quality control. Today, Indian businessmen are shipping over a thousand items after quality control to different parts of the world. The success of quality proven products from the Indian shores should go to EIC to a considerable extent.

Madras. These Agencies have opened nearly 60 nucleus offices spread all over the country. They

Control (IPQC) and Self-certification. Under the consignment wise inspection system, every consignment of a notified commodity is subjected to inspection prior to export. In the IPQC system, units adjudged as having adequate levels of quality control right from raw material stage to the finished product including packaging are eligible to get the inspection certificate, on a formal request. Over 756 units all over India are operating under this system. Under the self-certification system, complete authority is given to the manufacturing units to certify their own products and issue certificates of inspection export. More than 20 units who fulfilled the exacting norms have been approved under this system. constant vigil and surveillance are kept on the units approved under IPQC and self-certification systems.

### Disseminating Quality Awareness

In order to inculcate self-discipline and quality consciousness among exporters and manufacturers, EIC has set up a full-fledged Quality Development (QDC) at Madras and Regional Quality Development Centres at Bombay, Calcutta, Cochin and Delhi. These Quality Development Centres organize workshops and training programmes for different levels of personnel employed in the industry. They also extend technical guidance to the industry for upgrading the manufacturing units to avail of IPQC and self-certification system. Further, training programmes are conducted regularly for rearming the skills of inspection personnel employed in Export Inspection Agencies.

### Gaining International Credibility

International organisations like International Trade Centre (ITC)

### Testing Comes Of Age

Recently, a Pilot Test House has been set up in Bombay with sophisticated testing facilities for helping engineering units, especially in the small scale sector to upgrade their quality. This will facilitate checking for conformity of products with the relevant Indian Standard Specifications and also with other national and international standards. This test house has three sectional laboratories one each in mechanical, electrical and chemical testing which could also be utilised for testing of prototype samples and specimen of competitive products before taking up regular production.

At present the products which are tested in this test house include automobile spares, bicycles, diesel engines, electric fans, small tools and handtools, stainless steel utensils, steel tubes, light engineering products, safety razor blades, pressure cookers, aluminium utensils and household electrical appliances. These services are being provided to the export oriented industry at a reasonable cost.

For EIC, quality is the watchword. It has been rendering useful service to the Indian exporters to improve their business through quality products for the last 25 years. Consequently year after year, increasing number of foreign buyers have found total satisfaction with the quality of Indian commodities. When EIC was born in 1963, only a handful of commodities were being exported after quality control. Today, Indian businessmen are shipping over a thousand items after quality control to different parts of the world. The success of quality proven products from the Indian shores should go to EIC to a considerable extent.

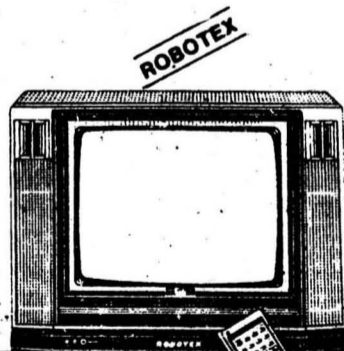
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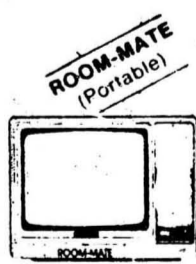
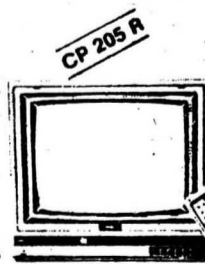
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